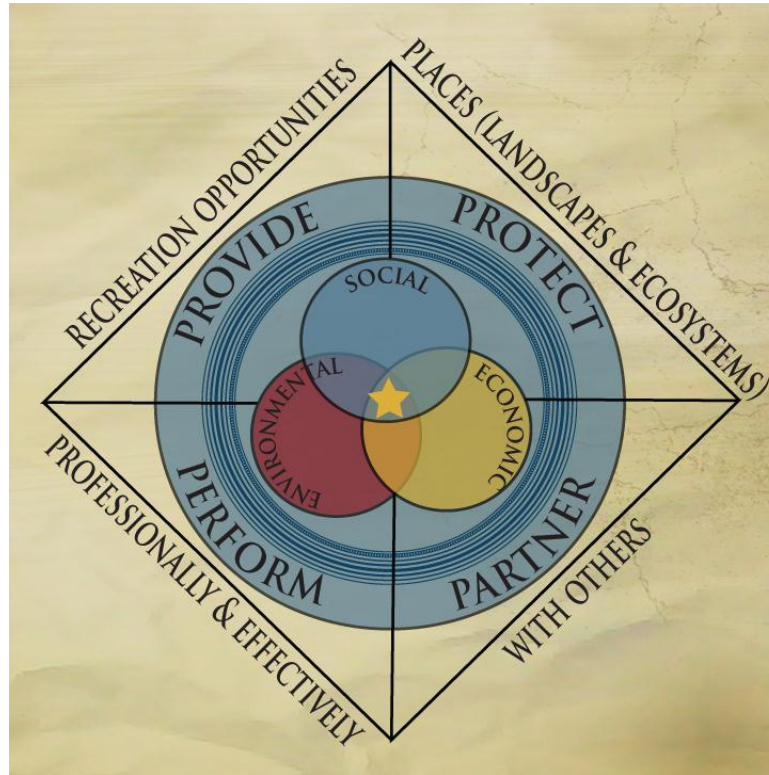


# Tonto National Forest

## Sustainable Recreation Update



**Tonto National Forest**  
**May 29, 2013**

*[Tonto National Forest Recreation website](#)*



# What Have We Done So Far?

## **Sept - Dec 2012**

- Drafted Public Outreach Plan
- Mailed invitations to nearly 300 interested citizens
- Activated sustainable recreation webpage and comment features
- Distributed news releases and earned media coverage (e.g. KJAZZ radio interview, Payson Roundup, recreation blogs)
- Posted meeting notices at recreation sites

## **Jan – Feb 2013**

- Hosted eight (8) public open houses in communities throughout the Tonto National Forest and Phoenix
- Met with approximately 300 interested citizens

## **March – May 2013**

- Analyzed approximately 376 comments
- Draft *Tonto National Forest Sustainable Recreation Strategy*

# Open Houses in Mesa, Scottsdale, and Payson, AZ



# Open House Format

Invited participants to rate preferences on the following recreation management strategies:

- Option 1: Fee Changes
- Option 2: Reduced Services
- Option 3: Concessionaire Management
- Option 4: Partnerships
- Option 5: Other

Asked participants to answer specific questions about the future of developed recreation management on the Tonto

- “Where should we focus our limited resources?”
- “Changes are coming – What should they be?”

Engaged participants **one-on-one** to answer specific questions and to provide clarity about FS policy



# Open Houses in Globe, Punkin Center, and Roosevelt, AZ



# What Did We Hear?

## Option 1 - Reduced Services

A reduction in services may include permanent camp loop and facility closures, deferred maintenance and cleaning schedules, seasonal site closures, and the alteration of flush toilets to vault toilets.

- Generally a strong sentiment against reducing services or closing sites, both permanently or seasonally
- Recognition that available capacity at some developed sites far exceeds demand, alongside support for the removal of unused and underused facilities
- Desire for continued or increased Forest Service presence at developed sites to maintain safety and cleanliness

# What Did We Hear?

## Option 2 – Fee Changes

Fee changes may include alterations to the cost of the Tonto Day Pass and Annual Pass, the separation of the Tonto Day Pass from camping, and fee increases.

- Support exists for fees at developed recreation sties
- There is a recognition that camping fees are low when compared to other camping fees in the region
- Demand exists for a multi-day Tonto Camping Pass (3-5 days or 14 days)
- There is a desire to increase fee compliance at developed sites

# What Did We Hear?

## Option 3 – Concessionaire Management

Utilize private concessionaires to manage Forest Service sites and reduce management costs.

- Most comments that addressed the concessionaire option were not in favor of this strategy

## Option 4 – Partnership Development

Develop, maintain, and utilize partnerships with non-profits, and local governments to reduce O&M costs at developed sites.

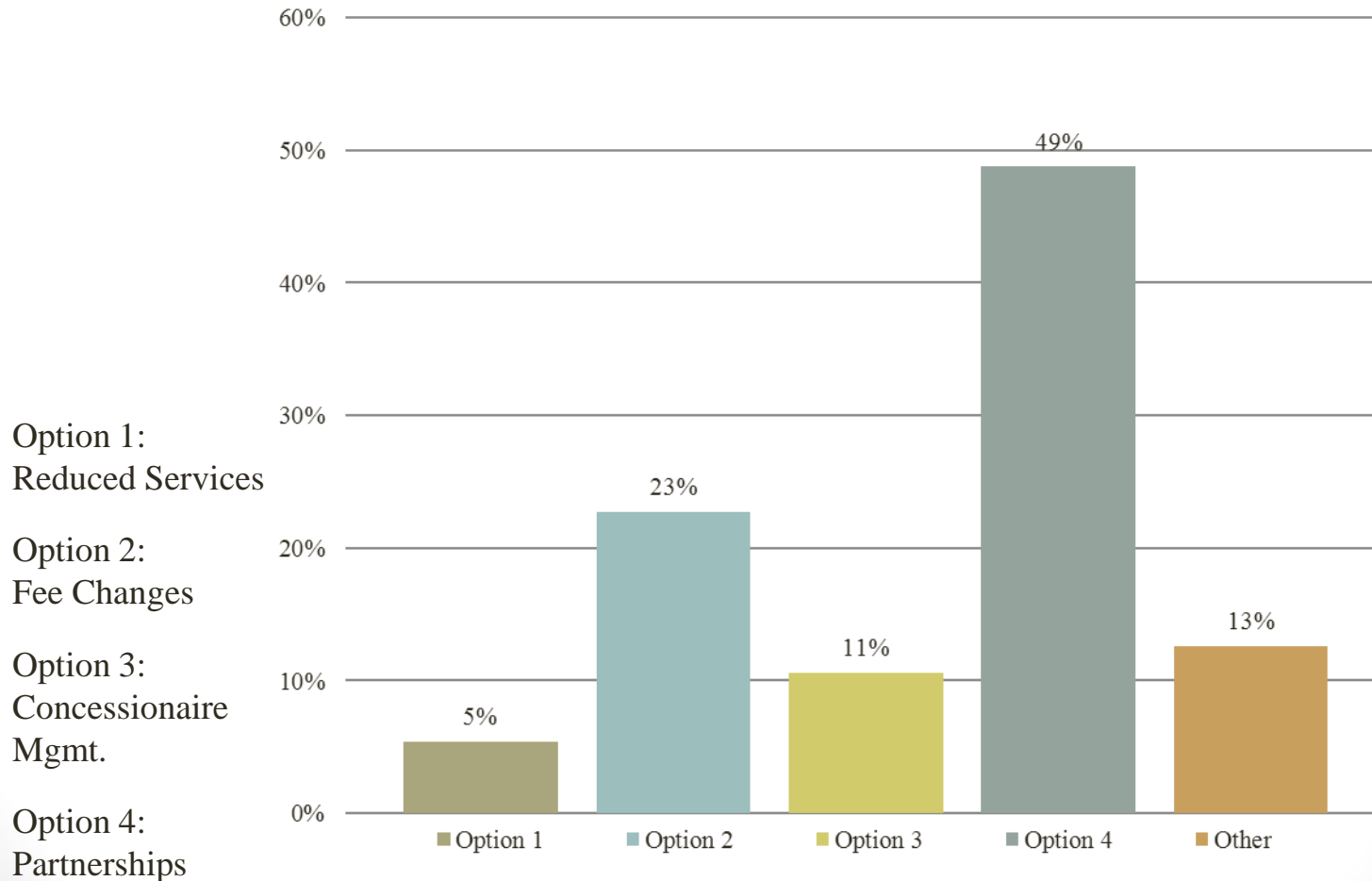
- Comments urged aggressive pursuit of partnership opportunities
- Interest expressed on establishment of an “Adopt a Site” program



# Site Management Preferences

**Dot Placement Exercise (3 dots/person)**

**Rank Your Preferences (All on One or Spread)**



# Changes Being Proposed

- Integration with *USFS Sustainable Recreation Strategy*
- Simplification and modification of the fee program
- Recognize **Interagency Pass** as standalone program
- “**Right-sizing**” underutilized recreation sites & services
- Improve **consistency** across the forest where fees are charged
- **Services based** approach to fee structure (as opposed to site based)
  - Picnic Sites
  - Boat Ramps
  - Nightly camping and multi-night camping
  - Special Recreation Permits
- Development and expansion of new and existing partnerships

# Where Do We Go From Here?

## Summer 2013

- Produce fee program changes for public review and comment
- Modify changes as necessary based on feedback
- Prepare Fee Proposal for Recreation Resource Advisory Council
- Public scoping for facility reduction and Environmental Analysis
- Expand partnership capacity

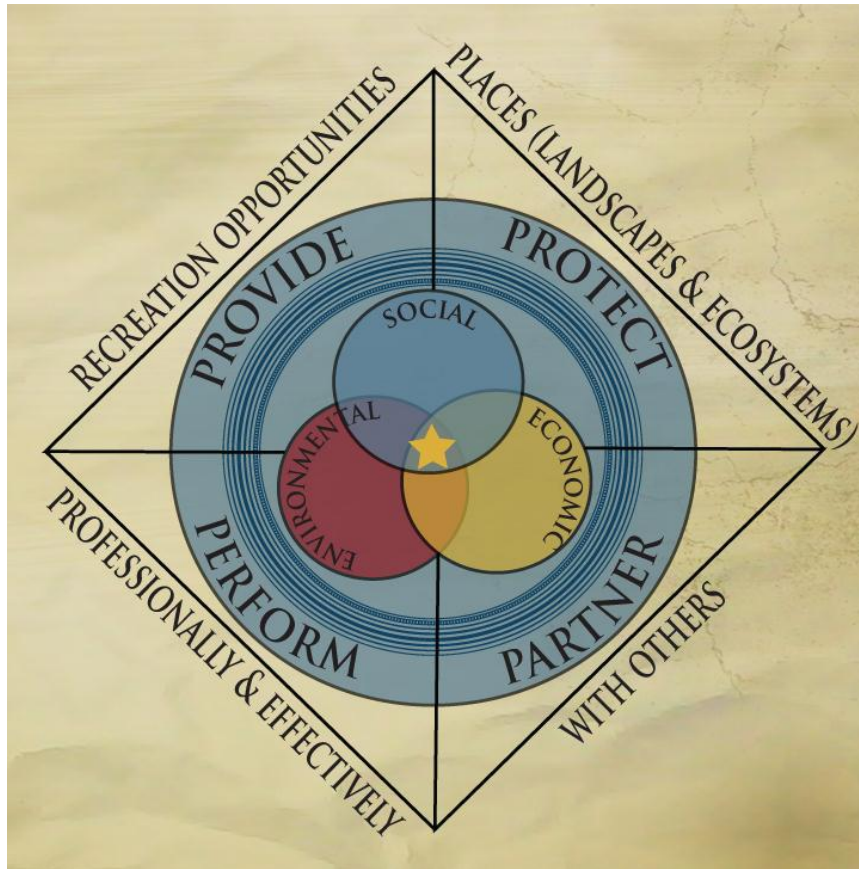
## Fall 2013

- Present fee proposal to Recreation Resource Advisory Council

## 2014

- Implement program changes using *Sustainable Recreation Framework*
- Monitoring changes and progress towards sustainability

# Questions?



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[Tonto National Forest Recreation website](http://TontoNationalForestRecreationwebsite)